DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 320 848 SP 031 859

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TITLE Generating Shared Leadership: Focus on Career Development.
PUB DATE 19 Nov 89
NOTE 22p.; Paper presented at a Meeting of the National Council of States on Inservice Education (San Antonio, TX, November 19, 1989).
PUB TYPE Speeches/Conference Papers (150) -- Reports - Descriptive (141)

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC01 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS *Career Development; Elementary Secondary Education; Evaluation Criteria; Leadership Responsibility; Mentors; *Participative Decision Making; Teacher Administrator Relationship; Teacher Improvement; *Teacher Influence; *Teacher Participation; *Teacher Role

ABSTRACT

The purpose of this paper is to discuss the development of shared leadership by focusing on the career of teaching in a single school system. Three elements are addressed which are important to the implementation and continuation of the career development program: teacher involvement, maintenance of an evaluation system, and flexibility through staged differentiation of the role of teachers. According to survey data, comments, and other information, the program is succeeding largely because of the involvement of teachers and administrators in program design and redesign. (JD)

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GENERATING SHARED LEADERSHIP: FOCUS ON CAREER DEVELOPMENT

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A paper presented at
The National Council of States
on Inservice Education,
San Antonio, Texas
November 19, 1989

INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this paper is to discuss the development of shared leadership by focusing on the career of teaching in a single school system. We will address three elements that we see as important to the implementation and continuation of the Career Development Program: teacher involvement, maintenance of an evaluation system and flexibility through staged differentiation of the role of teachers. Program outcomes will be discussed in the conclusion of the paper.

Description of Fort Bragg Schools

The school system is located on Fort Bragg Army post and adjoins Fayetteville, N.C., the largest metropolitan area in eastern North Carolina.

The school system includes eight schools and provides education in grade levels from pre-school classes and kindergarten through the ninth grade to children of military families residing on Fort Bragg and Pope Air Force Base.

The schools consist of one junior high school--grades seven through nine, one middle school--grades five and six, and six elementary schools. The first school was organized on Fort Bragg in 1921 and was operated by the local school system of Cumberland County with state funding. In 1951, the Fort Bragg Schools began to operate with federal funds independent of the adjoining county schools.

The school system's curriculum consists of core courses in communication skills, mathematics, science and social studies. Each K-4 school offers a full guidance program, resource programs for learning disabilities, academically gifted, remedial reading, occupational therapy and speech pathology. Students receive instruction in art, music and physical education. Students in grades 5-9 take exploratory courses in home economics, business and industrial arts. They may also elect foreign language, band, business, journalism, reading, library science or become peer facilitators. Ninth graders are taking part in an interactive videodisc physical science program. All students complete 10-20 minutes each day of drill and practice in each school's computer lab. We have recently implemented two new computerized language arts programs where students pre-write, write, re-draft and proofread using word processing skills.

The chief policy-making body for Fort Bragg Schools is the nine-member Fort Bragg School Board which is elected on a rotating basis by popular vote. Six members are elected to serve one of six districts while three members are elected to serve at-large

districts.

The military post itself covers 148,618 acres and services 160,000 persons of which 43,000 are assigned active duty soldiers. Known as the "Home of the Airborne," Fort Bragg and neighboring Pope Air Force Base form one of the largest military complexes in the world.

TEACHER INVOLVEMENT THROUGH SHARED GOVERNANCE: CREATING OPPORTUNITIES FOR LEADERSHIP

Shared Governance As A Guiding Principal

In 1982, the Superintendent of Fort Bragg Schools, Dr. Joseph V. Brust, implemented a system of "shared governance" in which teachers and administrators work together to share in the decision-making process.

Shared governance has also come to mean a system in which administrators and teachers try to respond to the needs and suggestions of each other through commitment to common goals. Recognizing that teachers are closest to classroom conditions that affect quality in teaching, shared governance offers teachers the opportunity to exert power, authority and influence over issues of quality. Furthermore, those who know the most about issues that affect quality in an area should take part in decisions that affect the level of educational quality.

Critical Organizational Events

In 1983, the Superintendent exchanged letters with a teacher who identified concerns with the previous evaluation process. This teacher was president of our teachers' union at that time.

Concerns expressed during this exchange focused on the evaluation timetable, the process of setting annual goals, the number of formal evaluations required and the lack of flexibility in the evaluation process for the master, tenured teachers as well as professionals other than classroom teachers.

The correspondence also indicated teacher support for a study to review, and if necessary, revise the existing evaluation procedure.

A system wide goal, approved by the School Board, was written to study and revamp staff evaluation which set a chain of events in motion.

Teacher Involvement in Revising the Evaluation Process

Teachers and administrators formed a system wide project group to study the problem, recommend solutions and then go out of business. One task group read the research literature on evaluation, another group built and distributed a questionnaire and the largest group held interviews/discussions with a representative cross section of Fort Bragg teachers, administrators and school board members.

After nine months of work, the group recommended 11 changes which were included in a preliminary report for system wide distribution and discussion. Each faculty member received a copy. Comments and recommendations were solicited at specially scheduled faculty meetings. The participants were then polled on each of the recommendations.

Table 1.
SUMMARY OF CHANGES TO THE EVALUATION PROCESS RECOMMENDED IN AUGUST 1984

1. The end result of the evaluation process should be instructional improvement.
2. The evaluation process should be continuously evaluated.
3. Staff development should be closely linked to instructional needs identified in the evaluation process.
4. Anyone who evaluates must be trained in observing, analyzing, problem identifying and conferencing.
5. Qualified experienced teachers should help prepare inexperienced teachers to successfully undergo evaluation.
6. Creation of a system of rewards that supports the improvement of instruction should be implemented.
7. A project group of teachers, board members, union representatives and administrators to examine career ladders, merit pay and incentive programs should be established.
8. The goal setting process should be streamlined.
9. An evaluation process more responsive to special area teachers should be developed.
10. A new evaluation form that reflects effective teaching practices should be developed.
11. Principals should provide their faculties with the opportunity to evaluate leadership and programs within their school.

Five Years After: The Impact of Career Development on Teacher Leadership

Each recommendation was embraced by the faculties at each of the eight schools. One of these recommendations led to the creation of a new program for school improvement, the Career Development Program. Fort Bragg Schools became a participant in a state wide pilot effort to develop a way to make the teaching occupation more

attractive by providing the opportunity to advance within the profession without leaving the classroom.

As a result, planning efforts began in 1984-85, staff development training began in 1985-86, and teachers were evaluated in 1986-87 for promotion to the first step on the Career Development Ladder. In 1987-88, 80 percent of the teachers were promoted and received a 4.5 percent salary increase.

The Career Development Program sought teacher involvement from the beginning. Previous merit pay programs were found to be designed by central administrative committees with little teacher input or provisions to monitor or receive feedback. Across the nation, the early efforts were often engulfed in controversy and at risk from the very beginning because of this design flaw.

Teachers took active roles through increased opportunities to participate in the production of the new summative evaluation instrument, lead workshops on effective teaching, teacher performance appraisal and mentorship among others (see table 5).

Table 2.
RECENT EXAMPLES OF LEADERSHIP OPPORTUNITIES

SYSTEM WIDE COMMITTEES
- The Curriculum Council
- The Career Development Steering Committee
- The Staff Development Committee
- The Communications Skills Committee
- The Math Committee
- The Student Services Committee
- The Thinking Skills Committee
- The Media Committee

SYSTEM FUNDED SUMMER PROJECTS
- Summer School Curriculum Development
- Designing Exceptional Children's Curriculum for the 21st Century
- Cooperative Learning
- Kindergarten, Pre-First and First Grade Study Group
- Cooperative Integrated Reading and Composition Pilot
- Systematic Teaching and Measuring Mathematics
- Media Re-Organization
- Here's Looking at You 2000
- Procedural Enhancement Project/Pupil Personnel Services
- Interactive Video Disc Science Curriculum

Goal Setting

Individual annual goals became more aligned with system wide goals. After training sessions were held, teachers felt more comfortable in writing and pursuing goals.

Committees were formed to establish an evaluation process for special area and support personnel. Opportunities to evaluate programs in the school system led to the development of new instructional programs and strategies by teachers and administrators working together. Most of these efforts came about as a result of committees working after school or during summer curriculum projects (see table 2.).

Most important of all was the improvement of student achievement scores on standardized testing.

Presently, every teacher in the system is involved in some way in contributing to the professional growth and educational improvement of the Fort Bragg Schools. The evaluation process has encouraged and, at times, required teachers to fulfill their creative potential to the fullest. It has done this by allowing them to feel ownership of an instructional program within a school system where administrators solicit, encourage and respect their teachers' professional opinion and expertise.

THE DEVELOPMENT AND MAINTENANCE OF THE EVALUATION PROCESS

Guiding Beliefs

We believe that the development, operation and maintenance of a sound teacher evaluation system is essential to school improvement efforts.

School improvement at Fort Bragg Schools has focused on a system of training, evaluation and rewards which we refer to as the Career Development Program.

The purpose of the Career Development Program is to improve quality teaching and learning. Because organizational rewards are at stake, i.e. salary, professional prestige and organizational status, teachers must trust and confide in the evaluation process. In developing the evaluation system, the district involved staff and utilized effective teaching and effective schools research as a base. The resulting system contains the necessary components of a sound evaluation system, being both reliable and valid in practice which will be discussed later in the paper.

The evaluation system is based on Performance Standards, a School Board policy which describes the knowledge and skills we believe to be necessary for effective teaching. The standards include: planning, appreciation of the importance of the profession,

managing daily instruction, individualizing instruction and human relations, among others. All teachers are expected to meet or exceed these standards.

The Importance of Development From Within

The Performance Standards have been translated into a summative evaluation instrument. A group of teachers and administrators within our school system developed the evaluation form. This group researched effective teaching practices and conducted structured interviews with teachers to determine problem areas in the then current evaluation process that needed improvement. The interview process proved very effective in collecting information. Interviewing seemed to personalize the process. The process of developing standards, researching criteria, interviewing staff, finalizing the instrument and gaining acceptance by the staff took three years (1983-1986).

The inside development of the summative instrument enhanced ownership and acceptability of the evaluation process. An internally developed system can be changed by the district provided an organizational structure is set up to review and make recommendations for changes. In our district, a system wide committee called the Career Development Steering Committee takes recommendations for changes and forwards them to the Administrative Council for their review and recommendation. Without such a structure in place, changes are difficult to make and usually happen only when coalitions of different groups form around a critical issue. The flexibility resulting from an internally developed instrument built from the ground up and subject to review and change has helped teachers view evaluation in a positive manner. Teachers have more opportunities to participate in meaningful professional dialogue, and the system derives benefits from high quality teaching. Evaluators report that the quality and quantity of instruction has increased in each of the last three years.

Research-Based Training Supports Evaluation

Once agreement is reached on the instrument, the next task is to assure staff members are properly trained. The essentials of sound classroom instruction that promote student learning are thoroughly explained in a thirty-hour workshop entitled Effective Teacher Training (ETT). The workshop defines what evaluators look for in classroom observations. Effective Teacher Training is taught by our own teachers and has been very positively received. Approximately 95 percent of all staff members have successfully completed ETT, which is mandatory for all employees hired after July 1986 and optional for those hired previously. This inservice is based on a training program available from The North Carolina Department of Public Instruction, Raleigh, N.C.

The process of evaluation is the focus of inservice for both teachers and principals. A twenty-four hour workshop, called

Teacher Performance Appraisal Training (TPAT), involves data collection, videos of teaching episodes and assessment techniques. All administrators and 121 or 39 percent of the teachers have successfully completed the course. Teachers continue to enroll. TPAT provides sound training in the evaluation process for administrators as well as providing teachers with a better understanding of how evaluation functions. To date, there has been one formal grievance and no teacher appeals of a summative rating. All teachers who successfully complete TPAT are offered practice observations in district classrooms. Teachers can volunteer for these practice observations, which are not included in the final summative ratings unless they request it. This training program was originally produced by The N.C. Department of Public Instruction which we adapted to fit our instrument.

Fairness and Objectivity

A survey taken in the spring of 1989, indicated that almost 80 percent of the teachers felt that observation data presented to them by the teacher evaluators and principals was fair and objective.

We believe that issues of reliability and validity in evaluation revolve around different yet interdependent concerns. Specifically, evaluation criteria and observation methods must be simple enough to be consistently followed in different schools by different evaluators yet sophisticated enough to assure that we are, in fact, measuring good teaching. We have come to see this relationship between reliability and validity as a question of balance. Common training sessions that outline what is to be observed (ETT) and how it will be observed and rated (TPAT) support both validity and reliability. In addition, principals and teacher evaluators meet to discuss difficult practices to measure. This is an important source of adjustment to the evaluation process.

The Role of Teachers in the Evaluation Process

One of the most positive aspects of the evaluation system is the employment of teacher evaluators. Teachers who have been trained in ETT and TPAT are eligible to become evaluators. One teacher evaluator is employed for every 96 teachers and for a term of three years. After three years in the position, teacher evaluators return to the classroom. All eligible staff members who apply for the position are interviewed by a team of teachers and administrators, who make recommendations to the superintendent for final selection.

The Concept of Shared Authority

Teacher evaluators share authority with building principals in the evaluation process. They observe teachers in a minimum of two buildings and, along with the principal, evaluate teachers in those buildings who participate in the Career Development Program. The experience of the district in Career Development shows that other teachers see teacher evaluators as helpers who reinforce the

improvement of student learning. We view this as the main purpose of teacher evaluation.

Principals have come to use the judgements of teacher evaluators each spring in assigning summative ratings. Because teacher evaluators observe a large number of different classes in different buildings, they have become experts in describing and analyzing the teaching act. Teachers and principals develop summative ratings by consensus based on written evidence from classroom analyses. The principal maintains ultimate authority and responsibility for the ratings.

Maintaining Reliability

Activities that monitor and adjustments we make to the evaluation system increase the reliability of the evaluation system. Summative ratings are analyzed and shared annually with the administrative staff. The ratings have also been shared with groups of teachers upon request. When the summative ratings for all items are totaled, averages for buildings can be developed. For the 1988-89 school year, the building averages were:

Table 3.
BUILDING AVERAGES ON THE SUMMATIVE EVALUATION INSTRUMENT, 1988-89

BUILDING	SUMMATIVE AVERAGE*
A	166.0
B	157.3
C	157.2
D	161.0
E	163.1
F	163.3
G	162.8
H	166.8
88-89 DISTRICT AVERAGE	162.2
87-88 DISTRICT AVERAGE	158.4

* Note: Total Possible Points = 200. It is important to note that no school varies more than 4.8 points from the district average in 1988-89.

Other activities have increased reliability. Teacher evaluators and principals conduct observe lessons in the same classroom at the same time and compare and discuss notes. Administrators view video teaching episodes and develop consensus ratings. Also, sample formative data have been discussed and analyzed as a group. System wide discussions are held for all who observe teachers in which discussions focus on difficult items to observe. These discussions often produce techniques used to overcome the difficulties which are shared across buildings. All exercises emphasize the importance of fairness, consensus and evidences to support

conclusions. District leaders are committed to making performance evaluation a reasoning process as well as a reasonable process.

THE USE OF FLEXIBLE EVALUATION TO CREATE SHARED LEADERSHIP

Once a teacher has achieved and maintained Career Status I for a period of three years, he/she becomes eligible to apply for promotion for Career Status II under the Career Development Program. In order to apply, he/she must have received an average performance rating of above standard across 40 practices.

Having met this requirement, teachers prepare for an interview process by writing a resume which outlines their past accomplishments in areas of leadership in education, communication and knowledge sharing. This resume of accomplishments serves as a document for reviewing their candidacy by a committee of peers.

Based on a decision that affirms their readiness to exert positive influence on goals of the school system, they are recommended to the Superintendent for promotion. Upon review by the Superintendent, they are recommended for this second stage in their career to the Fort Bragg School Board.

Upon receiving Career Status II, teachers receive a 14.2 percent salary increase over the base salary schedule.

More importantly, their role changes by incorporating a formal relationship to school goals via a new teacher-principal relationship in their building. This is accomplished by movement into a new evaluation process that facilitates <u>teacher development</u>.

<u>Different Role - Different Pay - Different Evaluation</u>
Most importantly, stage two teachers' role changes. They enter into a cooperative relationship with their building principal or program director to identify, plan for and accomplish goals associated with effective schools. In addition, they are expected to make school goals known and gain support for them. Stage two teachers must carry out these activities and maintain a healthy, positive relationship with colleagues. All stage two teachers are required to work in this new relationship with their principal. As for the role of the principal, it too has changed somewhat. Views of leadership in schools where the principal makes all decisions have changed with the increasing complexity of schools. Now, leadership reflects more of the capacity of a principal to facilitate decision-making by others who are closest to the point of contact with students. We hope this new relationship between stage two teachers and principals will aid in this new approach to leadership.

In addition to this formal relationship of cooperation, stage two

teachers chose one of the five following functions to pursue during the coming year: Mentorship, Knowledge Sharing, Communication, Leadership, or Renewal and Revitalization.

Table 4.
DISTRIBUTION OF TEACHING STAFF BY LEVELS OF CAREER DEVELOPMENT

TEACHERS BY LEVEL	NUMBER	PERCENTAGE OF STAFF
Career Status II	65	23%
Career Status I	155	54%
Provisional	40	14%
Initially Certified	16	6%
Non-Participants	8	3%
TOTAL	284	100%

Mentorship refers to the purpose of the mentor which is to help induct new teachers or teachers new to Fort Bragg Schools into the complex world of teaching. Knowledge sharing refers to an important process linked to the professionalization of teaching and was best described by Phillip Schlechty in his book, Teaching and Social Behavior, (1976):

> Professionalism is not necessarily synonymous with 'everyone doing his own thing.' Professionalism does not mean the absence of rules, sanctions and norms of performance. Rather, it means that the rules, sanctions and norms derive from some assumed basis of knowledge and expertise instead of being allocated to particular positions within the organization. The professional is autonomous only in so far as the norms, values, and performance standards of the profession are not violated (p. 90).

Examples of practices teachers may choose within the function of knowledge sharing are demonstration teaching, leading workshops, sharing lesson planning, teaching the preparation of instructional material or sharing techniques for measuring student achievement.

Communication refers to the rapid, direct and unambiguous transfer and return of information necessary to the effectiveness of schools. Stage two teachers may choose to share research with colleagues, write reports for distribution, act as spokesperson for system wide committees or represent school programs to parents.

Leadership draws from the large body of recent research on teachers as leaders. Little and Bird (1987) best discuss this need for teacher leaders:

> When school improvement is seen primarily as an increase in a school's collective capacity to pursue systematic improvements over long periods of time, demands on leadership are multiplied. These demands probably exceed the capacities of even skillful administrators, but could be more nearly met if the present school leadership were augmented by teachers proficient not only in teaching but also in support of other teachers (p.133).

Renewal and revitalization activities that teachers undertake to replenish themselves professionally by reaffirming the meaning of their work to each other. Their task is to make sure that a sense of satisfaction from one's work is felt at the psychic level.

Career Status II Goal Setting

At the beginning of each school year, Career Status II teachers meet with the principal or program director to review the Career Status II evaluation form. The principal discusses school needs and how they relate to choices on the evaluation form. The teacher and the principal agree upon areas around which goals are written. The principal and the teacher also agree upon other administrators who will provide evaluation information that feeds into the summative rating.

Once the principal and teacher agree on areas, the Career Status II teacher writes a goal statement that addresses outcomes, means of goal attainment and measurable outcomes. These goal statements are management devices. They serve the function of goal planning, monitoring and goal attainment. During the year, the principal and the teacher conference to exchange ideas, discuss timelines and resources. Modifications in planning are made during the year to fit changing circumstances. During the fourth quarter of the year, the principal holds a joint goal review conference to examine outcomes. Based upon the consensus of the principal and other evaluators, the principal assigns a summative rating. Principals hold final authority in this decision.

Table 5.
DISTRIBUTION OF CAREER STATUS II GOALS

MAJOR FUNCTION	NUMBER OF CSII GOALS	PERCENTAGE
Mentorship	23	36%
Knowledge Sharing	9	14%
Communication	14	22%
Leadership	15	23%
Renewal and Revitalization	3	5%
	64	100%

We would like to make two final comments about Career Development before we discuss outcomes of the program. First, Career Development is based upon the prescriptive assumption that truly professional teachers can and do develop in stages. It is the appropriate role of the school system to encourage this growth. Secondly, professional growth is a collective enterprise rather than an individual activity. This is why almost every performance expectation for stage two teachers contains the prepositional phrase 'with others' to indicate the importance of sharing our best professional understandings with colleagues.

CAREER DEVELOPMENT OUTCOMES

Data Collection Methods

Information about the Career Development Program was gathered from existing records and two surveys. The largest survey was distributed on May 30, 1989, to 436 professional staff consisting of administrators, teachers and instructional assistants. Of the surveys distributed, 317 were returned for a response rate of 72 percent.

The second survey was distributed to the Committee of Peers after they completed their task of interviewing and recommending candidates for Career Status II. The response rate was 62 percent with 16 out of 26 people returning the survey.

For purposes of analysis, teacher and administrator responses were separated from instructional assistants who do not participate in the program.

Test Scores,1982-1989

Table 6 .
RANKING OF THE FORT BRAGG SCHOOL DISTRICT
WITH OTHER DISTRICTS IN REGION 4
ON THE CALIFORNIA ACHIEVEMENT TEST
FOR GRADES 1, 2, 3, 6, AND 8
BY GRADE EQUIVALENT

READING

GRADE	1982	1983	1984	1985	1986	1987	1988	1989
1	8th	10th	3rd	2nd	3rd	2nd	*	*
2	11th	10th	2nd	3rd	2nd	2nd	*	*

3	7th	5th	2nd	2nd	1st	1st	1st	1st
6	3rd	2nd	1st	1st	1st	1st	1st	1st
8	*	*	*	*	1st	1st	1st	2nd

MATH

GRADE	1982	1983	1984	1985	1986	1987	1988	1989
1	13th	10th	5th	5th	3rd	1st	*	*
2	16th	11th	3rd	4th	3rd	2nd	*	*
3	7th	7th	2nd	3rd	1st	2nd	2nd	1st
6	11th	4th	3rd	2nd	1st	2nd	2nd	1st
8	*	*	*	*	1st	1st	4th	4th

In 1982 and 1983, for grades 1, 2, 3, and 6, Fort Bragg Schools' test scores in reading and math were among the lower half of the 17 school districts in Region 4. However, in 1984, a dramatic shift occurred. Test scores for the same grades in reading and math were ranked 1st, 2nd, 3rd and 5th.

Between 1984 and 1988, Fort Bragg Schools scored even better with many 1st, 2nd and 3rd place rankings.

What caused such a dramatic increase in test scores from 1982-83 to 1983-84? Why do relatively high levels of achievement continue?

First, teachers had a lot to do with improved test scores. Teaching improved in classrooms. Teachers placed a higher value on learning for their students. Teachers used a new technology to help their students learn - the CCC computer labs.

Second, the Superintendent placed new importance on teacher evaluation as a means of supporting quality teaching in the classrooms of the district. Dr. Brust identified taking a close look at the evaluation system and overhauling it if necessary as a district goal.

Principals learned new observation and teacher conferencing skills. They conducted the difficult process of evaluation with skill and success.

Teachers worked on subject matter in committees and teaching methods in workshops that helped everyone improve.

Finally, the Career Development Program must credit the teachers who teach in Fort Bragg Schools' classrooms and a strong

superintendent for consistently high test scores in our district. The work of teachers in curriculum, pedagogy, and inservice has been a contributing factor. Support by principals and other administrators and their willingness to take on a restructured evaluation process was critical to the improvement of test scores.

The function of the Career Development Program has been to reward accomplishments in teaching and school improvement in meaningful ways. Career Development encourages teachers to engage in activities we believe to produce student success by creating a cycle of ambition, effort, accomplishment, recognition, reward and renewed ambition.

Recruitment and Retention of Quality Teachers

Fort Bragg Schools has experienced an increase in interest in teaching opportunities as evidenced by requests for teaching applications.

Further, Fort Bragg Schools has been able to recruit an outstanding group of teachers in recent years despite critical teacher shortages in some areas of the curriculum.

This capability to continually recruit quality teachers is important because of the frequent turnover of teaching positions caused by the transfer of military spouses.

One measure of a school system's ability to recruit is the number of applicants for teaching positions received during a year. From January 1, 1987, to September 15, 1989, Fort Bragg Schools received 611 applications for teaching positions. During the previous nine months, Fort Bragg Schools received 334 applications for 44 teaching positions.

The Development of Quality Teachers Through Evaluation

Survey responses from teachers identified the evaluation process as one of the strongest program areas. For example, 79 percent of the teachers responding strongly agreed/agreed with the statement "The observation data presented to me by the evaluator has been fair and objective." Likewise, 78 percent of the teachers agreed with the same statement made about their principal.

Seventy-five percent (75%) of the teachers strongly agreed/agreed that they were more aware of performance expectations because of the Career Development Program. Seventy-four percent (74%) of the teachers strongly agreed/agreed with the statement that feedback from observations has identified specific strengths or areas in need of improvement. Training related to the evaluation process also received high marks from teachers who said that it has improved the skills of principals and administrators.

Communication

At the very beginning of the Career Development Program effort, a steering committee composed of teachers from each school was set up. Ninety-one percent (91%) of the teachers responding to the survey agreed with the statement that their faculty representative shared information discussed in local faculty meetings. Seventy-nine percent (79%) agreed with the statement that they had an opportunity to make suggestions to be carried to the Steering Committee meetings.

Leadership Opportunities for Teachers Have Increased

Teachers with knowledge and human relations skills have always had some degree of power and influence in schools. Until recently,institutionalized opportunities for teachers to exercise their knowledge and skill have been the exception rather than the rule. Only recently have we seen school systems officially value and recognize knowledge and its influence on the practice of teaching. For the first time on a large scale, teachers have an incentive to gain knowledge and improve practice. Across the nation, many school districts are beginning to leverage the organizational incentives of status, money and recognition toward school improvemnt.

Lynn Cornett, The Southern Regional Education Board's Clearinghouse Director, called career ladder programs the largest educational experiment underway in education in the nation today.

Fifty-seven percent (57%) of the teachers strongly agreed/agreed with the statement that the Career Development Program has increased leadership opportunities for teachers.

Administrators Strongly Support Career Development

The response rate for administrators was 55 percent with 11 out of 20 returning the survey. Those administrators returning the survey gave 100 percent agreement to the following statements:

1. Local personnel have made appropriate efforts to communicate with me about the Career Development Plan (description of the plan, guidelines, forms, Career Ladder Handbook).

2. Our faculty representative(s) to the Steering Committee share information discussed in local faculty meetings.

3. I have had the opportunity to make suggestions to be carried to Steering Committee meetings.

5. Educators are more aware of performance expectations because of the Career Development Program.

10. Training related to the Career Development Plan has enabled principals and other administrators/supervisors to strengthen their observation and evaluation skill.

The statement receiving the second highest agreement, 91 percent or 10 out of 11 administrators was " I support continuation of the Fort Bragg Career Development Program."

Administrators agreed that leadership opportunities for teachers had increased (82%) as well as opportunities for reward and recognition (82%)

Finally, administrators reflected the same uncertainty as teachers about how much parents, students or parent volunteers knew about the Career Development Program.

Favorable Response from the Committee of Peers

The Committee of Peers' task was to interview 75 candidates that had met the first set of eligibility requirements. They would then recommend those candidates to the Superintendent for Career Status II that had demonstrated accomplishments in the areas of professional knowledge, the ability to communicate and the capacity to lead others.

The question faced by most of the 26 teachers and administrators on the Committee of Peers charged with reviewing 75 candidates was "Can we organize and conduct this process in a way that will yield fair decisions and also reflect high standards?"
The results are as follows:

*100 percent of the 16 respondents agreed that the resume format was beneficial.

*94 percent agreed that the confidentiality of the total process was maintained.

*94 percent of the respondents agreed that the portfolio format was constructive.

*94 percent of the respondents agreed that the sharing sessions for the candidates were comfortable.

*88 percent of the respondents agreed that the ethics philosophy was adequate.

*88 percent agreed that the sharing session was informative as to the candidates qualifications.

*81 percent agreed that the fairness of the process was consistent.

*81 percent agreed that the process used in the full committee meeting on Monday, May 15, 1989, was satisfactory.

*81 percent agreed that the process used in the full committee meeting on Friday, May 19, 1989, was satisfactory.

Teachers Comment about the Career Development Program

Professional staff were asked in an open - ended question to comment about positive outcomes of the program and areas that were in need of improvement. Administrators, teachers and instructional assistants made 128 comments about positive outcomes of the program and 110 comments about areas to strengthen or improve the program. Many comments addressed multiple aspects of the Career Development Program. Each different idea was treated as a separate statement in order to categorize a summary of these comments follows.

Over 100 staff members made about 200 positive statements about results of the program. Following is a summary of statements listed according to how often they were mentioned by professional staff.

Sixty-two (62) statements cited positive improvements in teacher performance.Survey respondents cited improvements in lesson planning, teacher awareness of student involvement in the lesson and classroom management. Such statements as 'The program enables staff members to be more creative in their efforts to meet the needs of the students and to look within themselves and find talent that maybe they weren't aware of' indicates a high level of self-assessment and awareness.

Another respondent commented that teachers appear to approach their teaching in a more systematic way. 'It has improved all teachers and encouraged them to do their best.'

Other statements focused on more clearly defined performance expectations and more effective use of instructional time with students. 'Career Status I is fine because the kids benefit from what the teacher has to do.'

The evaluation process received 21 positive statements. For example, 'The observers were not threatening, but helpful.' 'Has helped me better understand evaluations.' 'It has helped us become more familiar with the evaluation instrument and has allowed us more opportunities to grow professionally.'

'Observation feedback - positive effects.'
'All teachers and administrators are now coming from the same standards, criteria, etc.'

The growth in teacher confidence received 19 positive comments such as 'Increased confidence of educators' and 'Teachers are encouraged to learn and try new things and put themselves forward.' 'I feel better about my abilities.' 'Provides recognition to educators for a 'job well done.' ' Recognition of some teachers and the extra effort they utilize.' 'Teacher morale, expectations and personal satisfaction with professional development.'

Salary increases were cited 16 times as a positive result: 'Incentive for higher pay' and 'Opportunity to move up the ladder if you make it' are examples.'It provides incentives for teachers (pay wise) to upgrade their skills.'

Sharing and the willingness to work together were mentioned in 12 statements such as 'It provides opportunities to share ideas among professionals in the same field as well as in different fields.' Another statement reflected the impact of training on teacher relationships 'Greater staff cohesion among those taking career ladder courses.'

Teacher participation was also cited six times: 'More teachers are taking part in district activities' and 'More voluntary participation in leadership roles by teachers.' 'More teachers are leading terrific meaningful courses or workshops.'

Remaining statements mentioned training, the handbook, the use of lesson plan formats and accountability as positive outcomes of the Career Development Program.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR PROGRAM IMPROVEMENT

The statements that follow are valuable indicators of areas that deserve the attention of the program director, the steering committee, principals, other administrators and of course, teachers.

Over 100 comments were offered about areas of improvement. It is our intention that these comments, taken with the survey results serve as a basis for formulating improvement goals for the Career Development Program.

The most frequently expressed concern, mentioned 29 times, was that other activities would take away from teaching. For example, 'I feel that in order to be a 'status II' teacher too much time is taken away from direct classroom teaching and teacher planning

time, as teacher has to concentrate her efforts on workshops and committees, etc. maybe some measures could be taken in this area.'

Similar comments read 'Don't swamp level II people with too many committees and extra duties.' 'Less meetings --more time for planning and preparing materials.' 'I'm afraid sometimes teachers spend time on workshops, committees, etc., that might be better spent doing things directly for kids.'

Observations and the evaluation process were cited 18 times in comments as in need of improvement. For example, 'Anyone can act and give a 'show' to the evaluators therefore the system needs to come up with a solution to such problems - teaching needs to be going on 180 days - not two to four.' Teachers have begun counting and comparing 5's, 4's, 3's, etc. This has turned into a degrading habit.' 'Grades should be judged on results not one to two hrs. of show and tell.' 'Continue to refine and standardize evaluation process.' 'Continue to select fair, understanding, and helpful evaluators.' 'Special areas need more objective performance observations.'

Better communication in different areas was cited six times. 'More PR to parents to let them know how it is improving their student's classroom teacher performance.' 'More community awareness.' 'More open communication between career steering committee and faculties/principals.' 'Communication outside of Fort Bragg Schools about the Career Development Program should increase.'

Paperwork, more training, competition among teachers and simply doing away with the program altogether each received 4 comments.

The selection of Career Status II teachers received 4 comments: 'The way career ladder II was evaluated does not determine your best teacher - most people can submit a 'showy' resume and interview.' 'All should be informed of any adjustments in the criteria and schedules for Career Status II. I do not think such information was fairly shared among all this year.' CS II candidacy should be done differently this year - failure at the end is not a positive program.'

The remaining comments suggested new directions in addition to improvements. For example, 'Establish teacher demonstration sites, formulate educational consortium to provide graduate level credit/training for teacher/educator development, begin to study implementation of site based management, evaluate the CS II selection process, uncover the 'glitches' and make plans to improve.' 'More sharing of tried and proven ideas.' 'More staff to staff observations and improved mentor activities.' 'Encourage professional staff to personalize their professional growth activities by attending grad school - provide support (time and

money) to attend graduate programs. "Courses are starting to repeat themselves - include some graduate courses to encourage people to get their masters." "To recognize military wives they don't stay put long enough to find it worthwhile - yet some are excellent teachers."

CONCLUSIONS

Based upon survey data, comments and other information, implementation of the Career Development Program at Fort Bragg Schools is succeeding largely because of the involvement of teachers and administrators in program design and re-design.

The Program has been able to produce results while still engaged in the process of implementation. Areas that stand out include a more thorough evaluation system that received high marks for objectivity, a high rate of participation in the program by teachers, a successful first time experience with selecting Career Status II teachers and a workable means of matching salary rewards to teacher performance while providing for professional mobility within the role of classroom teacher.

Perhaps most heartening is the overall trend of improvement in student achievement. The frequency of teacher concerns about the program not getting in the way of student learning is a positive sign that students are still foremost in the minds of our teachers.

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